

*National Defence Act Amendment*

and not merely for the sake of change, it is strictly up to the minister to prove his case. It is not, as suggested by some of those who no doubt are influenced by the minister, up to the opposition, to prove the hon. gentleman's case wrong. After all, the Department of National Defence and the armed services existed and operated efficiently long before the present minister reached the scene. On the basis of the speeches made in this house, as well as on the basis of speeches made elsewhere, I say that evidence to justify the need for change has not been produced. It is true there have been grandiloquent statements from the minister in that white-paper type of language which lends itself so conveniently to varying forms of interpretation as the need arises.

This leads to the second point I made. There was a great deal of confusion about the concept held by the minister when he spoke of a single unified defence force. There may have been some obscuring of the facts. I do not know. But certainly at the committee hearings which will follow this debate his use of the term "single unified defence force" will be questioned.

Speaking at various meetings, addressing either the general public or members of the armed forces, the minister has said in effect: do not worry too much about the question which is worrying a lot of people, whether this means a single service. But now we are presented with a bill whose basic principle is the establishment of a single service—not a single unified defence force because a single defence force does not necessarily mean a single service. One could have unification at command level. Our forces could be unified in their operations but it does not need to be composed of people in the self-same service wearing the self-same uniform and operating within the self-same rank structure.

Third, I contend there has been a not so subtle change in the objectives of Canadian defence policy. Peace keeping has been upgraded at the expense of the defence of Canada and our commitments under international treaties. The whole concept of the mobile force and the reasons given by the minister for the acquisition of certain equipment and for many of the things which have been done have always been based on peace keeping. However, we know that at the present time peace keeping has a low priority in the organization which alone has authority to despatch a peace-keeping force. After all, Canada is not planning to become a world policeman with an armed force ready to go about on its own initiative to knock heads

[Mr. Lambert.]

together. And we know that the concept of peace keeping is having a very difficult time at the United Nations and that unless there is almost a reversal of attitude by some of the principal nations belonging to the United Nations peace keeping will have an increasingly difficult time over the next few years.

This is not the occasion on which to raise some of the problems which go with peace keeping. But they are there. The first, of course, concerns the extent to which Canadian forces would be at the disposal of the United Nations untrammelled by any limitation as to their use. In other words, just how much authority over Canadian forces would Canada give to the United Nations without the right of veto with regard to their use? Unless it were guaranteed that the commander in chief of a peace-keeping force would be one of our own officers, the force might easily pass under the control of someone else.

Fourth, I spoke about the adverse effects on the navy. I will leave it at that. My remarks are on the record and many of my hon. friends will wish to speak about that subject.

Fifth, I inquired why so many senior military officers had retired prematurely or been relieved of their duties—13, as a matter of fact in three months. In the first of a series of articles written by General Foulkes last summer the writer asks: why is it that the whole of the command structure was completely changed in less than two years, something which has never happened before in Canada's military history? Many of these men were exceptionally young. They had been promoted by the minister. They had a brilliant future ahead of them, and certainly they did not fit into the category of officers who were the darlings of some rather ill-informed editorial writers or cartoonists—senior officers well past the age of retirement who had somehow or other become semi-senile. This, of course, is an altogether improper representation of these men.

• (5:00 p.m.)

Then I spoke of the uncertainty, the frustration and the demoralization in the armed services as a result of the minister's action or inaction. There was the frustration caused by delayed decisions. There was the inconsiderate action with regard to the release of the 500 pilots. It could have been done in another way if there was an excess of air crew. There was the minister's statement that there would be a compulsory reduction of some 10,000 in all ranks of the armed services. We know